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INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA 0056

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRAGUE 000445

SIPDIS

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EUR/NCE, WHA/CCA

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TAGS: [CU](#) [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [PREL](#) [EZ](#)

SUBJECT: CZECH COUNTRY REVIEW FOR WAIVER OF TITLE III OF
THE LIBERTAD ACT

REF: STATE 57782

Classified By: Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Michael Dodman for reason
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1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY. The Czech Republic has been applauded by the
USG for its strong support of democracy, human rights, and
fundamental freedoms in Cuba. The Czechs are actively seeking
a tougher EU common position on the Castro regime, in
contrast to the policy sought by Spain of increased
engagement. For years, the Czechs have supported the Cuba
country-specific human rights resolution. Czech NGO People in
Need (PIN), funded in part by the Czech MFA, is one of the
few on-island promoters of democracy and human rights.
Prominent Czech government officials and private citizens
continue to visit Cuba and receive Cuban dissidents in Prague
to focus the world's attention on the abuses of the Castro
regime. As a result of the Czech opposition to the Castro
regime, there are no material financial ties between the two
countries. END SUMMARY.

12. (U) The Czech Republic has maintained an active interest
in advocating for freedom and human rights in Cuba since its
own transition from a totalitarian regime in 1989. Former
Czech President Vaclav Havel, an internationally recognized
human rights activist, and other members of the Czech
leadership have assisted exiled dissidents and political
prisoners jailed in Cuba during the severe crackdown on
dissidents in 2003. The GOCR condemned the crackdown, issuing
an official statement calling on the Government of Cuba to
honor its international human rights commitments and
obligations. FM Cyril Svoboda instituted a policy requesting
all diplomats to raise the issue of Cuba at any international
meetings. This policy, together with Czech protests, was
delivered to the Cuban Government via official protest notes.
In addition, Czech President Vaclav Klaus and the Czech
Parliament issued statements in support of Cuban dissidents
and condemning the situation in Cuba.

13. (U) In July 2003, then Prime Minister Vladimir Spidla
traveled to Florida to meet with representatives of Cuban
dissidents, all of whom were political prisoners. This visit
was returned in May 2004, when eight Cuban dissidents
traveled to Prague to meet with Senate Chairman Petr Pithart,
Civic Democratic Party leader Miroslav Topolaneck, and
President Havel.

14. (U) Currently, the Czechs are advocating for a tougher EU
common position that, among other things, would recognize
political dissidents and provide sanctions for senior
officials of the Castro regime. Among EU countries, the Czech
Republic is one of the strongest supporters of the policy of
inviting Cuban dissidents to National Day festivities. The
Czechs provide training and support to Cuban civil society

through the efforts of People in Need (PIN), the MFA's NGO partner. Czech government officials, including Senator Karel Schwarzenberg and MPs Petr Bratsky and Tana Fischerova, continue to travel to Cuba to meet with dissident leaders and to place pressure on the Castro regime. In April 2006, the Cuban regime expelled a Czech diplomat, Stanislav Kazecky, in retaliation for his activities in support of the dissident movement. These activities highlight the committed engagement of the Czechs on the issue of Cuban human rights.

15. (U) In recognition of this commitment, Caleb McCarry, the State Department's Cuba Transition Coordinator, traveled to Prague in October 2005 to meet with Czechs actively working to promote democracy in Cuba, including GOCR officials, former dissidents, and PIN.

NO SUBSTANTIVE CZECH INVESTMENT OR TRADE

16. (U) The Czech Republic does not have any investments in Cuba. As an EU member state, the GOCR does not have any bilateral trade agreements, including with Cuba. The MFA confirmed that due to the GOCR's tense relations with the Castro regime, private Czech companies have reported that it is impossible for them to do any business in Cuba. There are no student exchange programs. The only meaningful economic activity between the Czech Republic and Cuba is private vacation travel by Czechs citizens to Cuba.

IMPORTANCE OF TITLE III WAIVER

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17. (C) COMMENT. A waiver of the right to bring an action against entities and nationals of the Czech Republic is necessary to U.S. national interests. Loss of this waiver would jeopardize our partnership with a country that has been at the forefront of efforts to force the Castro regime to adhere to international standards of human rights. From supporting the annual Cuban resolution to engaging in high-level diplomatic efforts with Cuban dissidents, the Czech Republic's profile on this issue is one of the strongest in Europe. This cooperation would definitely be impacted negatively if the GOCR were to lose the Title III waiver and feel that it is being unjustly "punished," when in fact it has been one of our best advocates on behalf of the Cuban cause.

DODMAN